

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Indexing Day, Thursday 28 March 2024

The Society of Indexers is celebrating National Indexing Day for the eighth successive year on Thursday 28 March 2024.

National Indexing Day was established in March 2017 to commemorate the diamond anniversary of the founding of the Society of Indexers. Since then, celebrations of indexing have taken place at live events, online and in the media. Indexers, authors and publishers have joined in enthusiastically to salute these ‘unsung heroes of the publishing world’, in Sam Leith’s words in *The Guardian*. This year we will be celebrating with a half-day in-person workshop for publishers in London, as well as online across social media.

The date marks the anniversary of the founding of the Society, which was formally constituted at the premises of the National Book League in London on 30 March 1957 by G. Norman Knight and colleagues. The Society of Indexers is the only autonomous professional body for indexers in the United Kingdom and Ireland and is associated with other indexing organisations around the world. Its aims are to promote indexing, the quality of indexes and the profession of indexing. Membership includes specialist indexers across the UK, working for authors and publishers in more than a hundred different subjects, from accountancy to zoology.

A good index is a vital component of a non-fiction book, providing a structured map to its content. Poor or absent book indexes are frustrating for readers, reviewers and students, as regularly remarked upon in book reviews and on social media. Indexes are still important for ebooks in the digital age. Dedicated indexing software can automate certain tasks, but a human indexer is needed for the intellectual work. Computers can’t read like a human, so they can’t index like one. A Ctrl-F search is not a magic solution. It does not distinguish between significant information and passing mentions, suggest synonymous access points unmentioned in the text, highlight connections between concepts, or show the relative content and coverage of topics. Professional book indexers are trained to address these issues and to look at each text from the readers’ perspectives. With newer embedded indexing techniques, index entries can be anchored and linked to their precise location in the text, so that the same index can work across different formats and with reflowable text in ebooks. Today’s professional indexers have both the know-how and the technology to achieve this, but it is often underused.

For National Indexing Day 2024, the Society of Indexers is offering an in-person workshop for publishing professionals who would like to improve their understanding of the indexing process. This will be held at the Publishers Association, 50 Southwark Street, London SE1 1UN on Thursday 28 March. The workshop will run twice that day, in the morning and afternoon. Following a welcome from our honorary president, Sam Leith, a series of presentations by professional indexers will cover the value of indexes, how best to work with an indexer and the advantages of indexing software used by indexers. There will also be an interactive practical session for participants to try live indexing and time for questions and discussion. The



workshop provides a useful opportunity for indexers and publishers to learn from each other so that together we can create better indexes and make non-fiction books more valuable and saleable. Tickets and a provisional programme are available now at: <https://www.indexers.org.uk/events/national-indexing-day-2024>. The ticket price is £30. We look forward to another successful National Indexing Day 2024 online at #indexday and live in London.

Further information

For further information, please email marketing@indexers.org.uk or follow us on X/Twitter (@indexers), or LinkedIn.

The Society of Indexers was established in 1957 to promote improved standards in all forms of indexing. It maintains the online Directory of Professional Indexers, which is searchable by subjects, skills and media. Further information about its training course, conference, local groups and how to commission an indexer can be found on its website: www.indexers.org.uk